

Fundamentals of Jazz Performance

“PERFUNDALS”

MUJS 1131

Fall 2026 - Mon/Wed 1:10-2:00 PM



INSTRUCTOR: Liz Townsend

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OFFICE HOURS: by appointment

DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

Fundamentals of Jazz Performance (vocal section) is the entry-level jazz curriculum course in the UNT Division of Jazz Studies with the purpose of exploring many facets of what it takes to be a successful vocal musician in the program as you study the art of jazz.

By the end of this semester, you will be able to:

- Have a grasp of who the most important jazz singers (soloists and ensembles) are, what distinguishes them from each other, and be able to place them on a timeline in history from the inception of jazz singing to present day.
- Confidently create written representations of your songs using computer notation software and either create or expand your “book” of tunes and lyrics for performance.
- Sing along in performance with vocal artists and imitate their style through striving for perfection in all aspects of matching them.
- Develop foundational transcription skills for transcribing music from recordings, starting with bass lines and moving into chord progressions.
- Develop practice methods for improvising over chord changes in a combination of theoretical and aural ways.

COURSE ATTENDANCE & GRADING

ABSENCES & ASSIGNMENTS

- Absences are limited to two per the semester.
- If there is a medical emergency, the student and instructor will work out a modified due date for the assignment(s) missed ASAP.
- If you are unable to attend class because you are ill, it is imperative that you communicate with me **prior to being absent** in order for the absence to be considered excused.
- Other than a medical-impossibility of singing, all other assignments that were due in class must be submitted by recording on the day it is due or it will be subject to a late penalty (see below).

GRADING

- Each assignment/performance will be graded on Canvas; the grade is determined by the quality of preparation and the musicality of the assignments/performances.
- Your final semester grade will be calculated as follows:
 - Attendance & class participation - 10%
 - Assignments - 80%
 - Final Exam* - 10%
- Homework, in-class performances, or projects that are submitted late will be subject to a grade reduction off the total grade. All assignments are still expected to be completed since you must learn the material (exceptions will only be made for excused absences cleared in advance on a case-to-case basis). The following scale will be used for late work:
 - 1-2 days late = 10% reduction
 - 3-6 days late - 25% reduction
 - 7-13 days late = 50% reduction
 - 14+ days late = no credit

*Final Exam: as per the university-wide final exam schedule, the final exam for this class is scheduled on **Wednesday, December 9 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM**. To see the full UNT final exam schedule, visit: <https://registrar.unt.edu/exams/final-exam-schedule/fall.html>

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- iRealPro App (for phone, tablet, and/or laptop)
- Professional notation software - Dorico Recommended (version 5 or 6)
 - HIGHLY recommended to be purchased and registered on your laptop computer; if not possible, you may use the Music Computer Lab.
- Recommended: Korg NanoKey or other small/portable MIDI keyboard entry device

OTHER MISC. POLICIES

- Please silence your phone prior to entering the classroom space and put it in an inaccessible place to avoid causing distraction to yourself or anyone else. The only exception will be when you plan to use your phone as a recording device, in which case it must remain in “airplane mode”
- Laptops/tablets may be used for note-taking and recording purposes, but no other activities. Students found to be doing so will earn a failing grade for class participation for that day.
- **Important Note:** Although this syllabus is a guide to our plan for this class, the final word on scheduled assignments, due dates, and specific content for each assignment will be on Canvas, NOT this syllabus due to adjustments that will invariably need to be made to accommodate the individual pace and level of this specific class. It is each student’s responsibility to consult the online course to verify each assignment’s content and due date.

RESOURCES & POLICIES

Academic Integrity Policy - <https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>

Dean of Students - <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>

Access to Information (Eagle Connect) – eagleconnect.unt.edu

Office of Disability Access - disability.unt.edu

Diversity and Belonging - <https://idea.unt.edu/diversity-inclusion>

Registration Information for Students – <https://registrar.unt.edu/students>

Academic Calendar Fall 2025 - <https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/fall-academic-calendar.html>

Health and Safety Information - <https://music.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness>

Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress, undergrad - <http://financialaid.unt.edu/sap>

Retention of Student Records - <http://ferpa.unt.edu/>

Counseling and Testing - <http://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>

Mental Health Resources - <https://disparities.unt.edu/mental-health-resources>

Add/Drop Policy - <https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/fall-academic-calendar.html>

Student Resources - <https://success.unt.edu/aa-sa-resources>

Care Team - <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care-team>